

# REPORT of the MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH to the RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL of WILTON for the year ending 31st December, 1896.

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AREA of the DISTRICT in ACRES, 56,868.      POPULATION of the DISTRICT, CENSUS 1891, 7,774.  
ESTIMATED POPULATION to the MIDDLE of 1896, 8,180.

DEATH RATES :—General 11·1 per 1,000 population, estimated to middle of 1896.  
,,      Infant (under one year of age) 56·0 per 1,000 Births registered.

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GENTLEMEN,

The population corrected to Midsummer, 1896, was 8,180, as compared with 7,774 at the census of 1891. The area of the District is 56,868 acres, giving one inhabitant to 6·9 acres. The inhabited houses number 1,630, and the average number of occupants in each house is 5.

The village of Bemerton has a public water-supply from the Bemerton Water Works. Since the last annual report, the village of Quidhampton in the same parish has been provided with a series of pillar pumps, placed at convenient distances from each other, so as to afford an improved supply to the houses in all parts of the village. These pillar pumps draw upon wells situated in the permanent pasture land to the north of the village. The result has been so far satisfactory.

The water-supply of Upper Fovant continues to answer well, and during the year I was asked to report upon the desirability of extending this supply to Lower Fovant, as recommended by the Fovant Parish Council. In July and August, in company with the Surveyor, I carefully inspected the whole of Lower Fovant and examined the existing water-supplies. The distance which the pipes would have to cover if the present service were extended would be about three-fifths of a mile, and in view of the very small number of cottages to be supplied, and of the enormous expense of laying pipes, and of the difficulty of tracing faults in frosty weather, I did not consider that the question of continuing the present water mains to Lower Fovant could be seriously entertained, even if it were found that the levels were practicable. The same objection would apply to an alternative suggestion of the Parish Council to make a new empounding station on Moor Hill, and lead a main from it to Lower Fovant. With one or two exceptions, the existing wells are mere dipping-holes in dangerous situations, and are quite unsuited for their purpose. I have no doubt that if proper wells are sunk to a sufficient depth in suitable situations, and they are properly constructed and steyned, an ample supply of good water will be obtained. In Upper Fovant and in Quidhampton there existed flat, closely inhabited, sewage-sodden areas, in which it was impossible for individual proprietors to obtain potable water, and a public supply was consequently called for. In Lower Fovant these conditions do not exist, and it is possible for proprietors acting singly or jointly to obtain a supply by sinking wells. Two such wells have since been sunk, and although these have been too recently constructed to warrant a final opinion being given, yet the School well promises to become a good source of supply.

Thirty-seven samples of water have been analysed during the year. Eleven were of a suspicious or bad character, and in these cases steps were taken to have the wells or tanks cleansed and any source of pollution removed. These samples were drawn from Barford St. Martin, Baverstock, Berwick St. James, Bishopstone, Bower Chalke, Broad Chalke, Burcombe, Compton Chamberlayne, Dinton, Ebbesbourne Wake, Fisherton Delamere, Fovant, Fugglestone, Little Langford, Netherhampton, South Newton, Steeple Langford, Wishford, and Wylke. One well was closed, six new wells were sunk, and five were cleansed or improved and repaired. One hundred and seventy-three houses derive their supply from water-mains.

No organized system of excrement collection by pail or otherwise is in operation in any part of the district, but privies and earth-closets are used where water-closets are not available. During the year seven privies were ordered to be cleansed and repaired. Fifteen new water-closets were supplied with water. Three cisterns were found out of repair.

One house has been closed, and fifteen houses have been erected during the year. Twenty-one houses have been restored to a state of habitable repair. One case of overcrowding was dealt with.

The streams are clear and free from pollution injurious to health. The fishing clubs, to whom most of them are let, keep the banks in excellent order. As however these streams receive the drainage of villages, farmyards, and highly cultivated lands, the water drawn directly from them is not allowed to be used for drinking purposes.

No Burial Ground in the district is at present overcrowded or injurious to health. Additional space has been secured for the enlargement of the Dinton Churchyard.



The slaughter-houses, bake-houses, workshops, dairies, milkshops, and cowsheds have been duly inspected.

The bye-laws, urban and rural, concerning these and other matters have been enforced during the year.

The district is annually inspected by the Inspector of Nuisances and the Medical Officer of Health. During the year 1,690 visits of inspection were made. One house was closed, 55 houses were in an insanitary condition, 145 nuisances were reported, and 122 of these were abated by the end of the year.

Diphtheria has been prevalent during 1896 in Barford, Bishopstone, Bemerton, Burcombe, Compton Chamberlayne, Dinton, Ebbesbourne Wake, Fovant, Netherhampton, South Newton, Stapleford, and Wishford, and fatal cases were reported from Compton, Ebbesbourne Wake, Fovant, and South Newton. In all, 66 cases were notified, with five deaths.

Infectious sore-throat of another form was also prevalent, with joint and cardiac complications.

Scarlatina occurred in Barford, Burcombe, Dinton, Fovant, Bishopstone, Baverstock, Fugglestone, and South Newton. Puerperal Fever was notified from Wylke, Baverstock, and Broad Chalke; Erysipelas from Barford, Compton, Steeple Langford, Ebbesbourne Wake, Fovant, Broad Chalke, and Dinton. Cases of Small-pox were notified from Barford St. Martin.

The outbreak of Small-pox was due, I believe, to some article which had escaped destruction or proper disinfection when the outbreak occurred in 1895; at least the children first attacked were those who sat next a member of the family that suffered in the previous epidemic upon that child's first return to school. The cases that followed were all cases of modified Small-pox, and were often milder than cases of Chicken-pox and Swine-pox prevalent at the time. I thought it would be more satisfactory to the Sanitary Authority in these circumstances to have a second opinion before incurring the expenditure of what might ultimately prove a very large sum of money. I considered also that it would strengthen their hands in carrying out the Notification Act. The restraints of quarantine are so irksome, that there is always a tendency on the part of the public to treat modified Small-pox as Chicken-pox, which is a disease they are not compelled to notify. I therefore called in consultation a Physician formerly Medical Officer of the London Fever Hospital, and he confirmed my view of the true nature of these cases. The Sanitary Authority promptly secured a suitable house, in a very isolated spot, as a Small-pox Hospital, and to this the furniture, bedding, and ambulance used in the last Hospital were conveyed. The services of a nurse were secured, and the patients were removed as speedily as possible. Bedding and clothing to the value of £23 7s. 9d. were subsequently destroyed, and the patients' houses were disinfected as thoroughly as the means at our disposal would admit. I feel bound to confess however that nothing short of steam under pressure is to be trusted to disinfect the contents of a house in which Small-pox has occurred.

During the year 40 houses were disinfected for infectious disease; carbolic acid powder to make 250 gallons of disinfecting solution was distributed; 180 sulphur candles were used, besides camphorated oil, carbolic soap, and solution of perchloride of mercury.

Among the deaths occurring in the district during the year, 5 were due to Diphtheria, 1 to Measles, 9 to Phthisis, 10 to Heart Disease, 13 to Bronchial affections, and 7 were the result of injuries.

It became necessary to close the schools of Ebbesbourne Wake, Compton Chamberlayne, and Fovant, in consequence of diphtheria; Dinton, in consequence of scarlatina; and Barford St. Martin, in consequence of small-pox. In other cases it was considered sufficient to exclude the children of infected families, without closing the schools.

The chief sanitary want of the district at present appears to be a proper disinfecting apparatus. The matter received the careful consideration of the Sanitary Authority during the summer, but the price charged appeared exorbitant. There seems to be no reason why a steam chamber should not be attached to an ordinary road roller at a moderate cost; and there is no doubt that it would form a useful combination for Sanitary Authorities. Had we had it, we need not have paid the £40 we spent in the last two years for clothing and bedding destroyed. Sulphur fumigation and other chemical disinfectants, when used for small-pox, often only serve to give a false security, which is in itself a source of danger.

No legal proceedings have been necessary during the year, and notices have, as a rule, been promptly complied with. The Food and Drugs Adulteration Act is under the charge of a special officer, appointed by the County Council.

The Sanitary Staff remains the same as last year.

During the year special reports have been made on the small-pox epidemic at Barford St. Martin, and on the water supply of Lower Fovant.

The total number of deaths was 91—45 males and 46 females. The death-rate per thousand was 11.1, which is, I think, the lowest death-rate we have had. The average death-rate for the last five years is 14 per thousand.

The total births were 193, of which 105 were males and 88 females, giving a birth-rate of 23.5 per thousand. The average birth-rate of the last five years is 24.9.

I append the usual Tables of Sickness and Death, and the Schedule of Supervision exercised.

I am, Gentlemen, yours faithfully,

CHARLES R. STRATON,

*Lic. San. Sc., Durham.*

Table of DEATHS during the year 1896, in the Wilton Rural District, classifed according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

NAMES OF LOCALITIES.	MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES, AT SUBJOINED AGES.								MORTALITY FROM SUBJOINED CAUSES, DISTINGUISHING DEATHS OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OF AGE.								
	At all ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 and up- wards.		Diphtheria.	Measles.	Diarrhoea and Dysentery.	Phthisis.	Bronchitis, Pneumonia and Pleurisy.	Heart Disease.	Injuries.	All other Diseases.	TOTAL.
Bishopstone ... ..	49	5	5	3	4	8	24	Under 5	3	1	—	—	1	—	—	5	10
								5 upwds.	1	—	—	6	8	5	2	17	39
Wilton ... ..	42	6	2	1	3	12	18	Under 5	—	—	1	—	2	—	1	4	8
								5 upwds.	1	—	—	3	2	5	4	19	34
TOTALS ... ..	91	11	7	4	7	20	42	Under 5	3	1	1	—	3	—	1	9	18
								5 upwds.	2	—	—	9	10	10	6	36	73

Table of POPULATION, BIRTHS, and of NEW CASES of INFECTIOUS SICKNESS, coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health, during the year 1896, in the Wilton Rural District ; classifed according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

NAMES OF LOCALITIES.	POPULATION AT ALL AGES.		Registered Births.	Aged under 5 or over 5.	NEW CASES OF SICKNESS IN EACH LOCALITY COMING TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.				
	Census 1891.	Estimated to middle of 1896.			Small-pox.	Scarlatina.	Diptheria.	Puerperal Fever.	Erysipelas.
Bishopstone ... ..	7774	8180	103	Under 5	8	7	5	—	—
Wilton ... ..			90	5 upwards	8	17	61	3	9
TOTALS ... ..	7774	8180	193	Under 5 5 upwards	8 8	7 17	5 61	— 3	— 9

State here whether “ Notification of Infectious Disease ” is compulsory in the District—*Yes*. Since when?—*1894*. Besides the above-mentioned Diseases, insert in the columns with blank headings the names of any that are notifiable in the District, and fill the columns accordingly. State here the name of the Isolation Hospital used by the sick of the District. Mark (H) the Locality in which such Hospital is situated ; and if not within the District, state where it is situated?—*For Small-pox only, at Dinton*.



Summary of Work done through the Sanitary Inspector in the Rural Sanitary District of Wilton during the year ending December 31st, 1896.

	Total No. for Year.	Results of Inspection, etc.		Total No. for Year.	Results of Inspection, etc.
1. Complaints received	15		21. Leaky taps repaired where drawing from public mains	4	
2. Cottages inspected	1690		22. Houses connected with sewers	5	
3. Lodging-houses inspected	Nil.		23. Houses connected with water mains	173	
4. Slaughter-houses inspected	2		24. Earth, pail, or improved privies, drains, and cesspools constructed or existing privies altered	46	
5. Bake-houses inspected	17		25. Privies and W.C.'s repaired— 7 W.C.'s supplied with water—15	22	
6. Dairies and Milk-shops inspected	61		26. Cisterns cleansed, repaired, or covered	3	
7. Cowsheds inspected	61		27. Animals improperly kept removed	Nil.	
8. Workshops inspected	7		28. Samples of water taken for analysis	37	26 good and 11 impure
9. Filthy houses cleansed, sec. 46, Public Health Act, 1875	55		29. Samples of food or drink taken for analysis	Nil.	Taken by County Inspector
10. Houses disinfected — 29 and 11 and supplied disinfectants	40		30. Compensation paid for destruction of infected bedding and clothing	£ s. d. 23 7 9	
11. Overcrowding abated	1		31. Seizures of unsound meat, &c.	Nil.	County Inspector
12. Houses placed in habitable repair	21		32. Nuisances reported or detected	145	
13. Houses closed	1		33. Nuisances abated	122	
14. Houses erected or rebuilt, for which "Certificates" were applied for	15		34. Notices served	185	
15. "Certificates" granted	15		35. Summonses taken out	Nil.	
16. "Certificates" deferred	Nil.		36. Convictions	Nil.	
17. Wells sunk or improved supplies of water afforded	6				
18. Wells cleansed or repaired	5				
19. Wells closed	1				
20. Defective pumps repaired or new pumps erected to existing wells	1				

(Signed) JOHN GOULDEN.